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THE PORTRAIT OF A HERO

UP in Dutchess county, not so far away from New York City that a crow could not get there between breakfast and luncheon without growing hungry, is a queer little settlement of villages which bear such nautical appellations as "Mizzentop," "Mainmast," "Martingale," "Spankerboom" and I cannot recollect what else. No doubt these names have puzzled others as they once did me, but, like all conundrums, the solution is not a difficult one. It was in this country that one of the most gallant seamen of the American Navy, Rear-Admiral John L. Worden, courted and won his wife. It is here that he spends his summers, and the nomenclature of this section of the country is adapted to his honor. Far from the smell of the salty swells on which he won his laurels, the old Admiral, as he paces his veranda, can still feel himself almost at home on the starboard side of the quarterdeck, among the christenings that have been given on his account to these villages, nestling amid green trees and cottage gardens, and wheat-fields that make golden billows before the wind, like the long heavings of the Sargasso sea.

I had the veteran who fought the *Monitor* against the *Merri-mac* in Hampton Roads, thirty years ago, very forcibly brought before me in the office of the Henry-Bonnard Company's bronze foundry, in this city, last week. Awaiting the hands of the moulder was a panel in half relief, from the hands of James E. Kelly, the sculptor, showing the Admiral in profile, facing to the left, bust size, on a plane some 18x24 inches in dimensions. The portraiture was striking, not only in mere outline but also in character and spirit. The treatment was simple and strong, the clay having been handled like stiff wax, and all attempts at that smoothness of surface which so weakens a piece of modeling, ignored. The panel was finished at the base with a low-relief sketch of the *Monitor* on a narrow entablature, and was signed by the Admiral himself: "John L. Worden, Rear Admiral, U.S.N., Aug. 27, '92." The portrait was made by Mr. Kelly, at Quaker Hill, in Dutchess county, where he was spending the summer and had his sitter for a neighbor, and is to be cast, I believe, for the Admiral himself.

This portrait is the latest of a series which this gifted and original young artist has been collecting for some years, and which will some day be conceded a place of eminent importance among our artistic records of the Civil war. Mr. Kelly has, in all cases, secured his portraits from life; generally making first a careful pencil drawing, and then putting it in the clay, with further sittings from the hero. The autograph signature of the original adds to the interest of each portrait. The profile plan is adhered to throughout. The artist, I understand, contemplates having the series cast in bronze, the size being uniform with that of the Worden portrait. It is not impossible, also, that he may at some time publish reproductions of his drawings—which are masterly examples of clear, distinct and vigorous pencil work—in connection with a great deal of valuable personal material which he gathered through contact with his sitters. Such a publication would be an agreeable relief to the ordinary technical monotony of the prevailing style of papers upon the Rebellion, and the cut-and-dried biographies of the chief actors in that tremendous and momentous drama.

This portrait of Admiral Worden comes opportunely, now that we are building up a navy on the idea which John Ericsson created and the Admiral—then, by the way, only a lieutenant—first put to effective use. The building of the *Monitor* revolutionized the navies of the world, and while her inventor has been carried to his last resting place on one of the steel monsters which owe their origin to him, the sailor who steered his invention into battle survives, in a green and honored old age, ennobled by the wounds

that register the peril of his venture. In Mr. Kelly's portrait, the scar under the Admiral's left eye is indicated. People who think that sea-fighting behind iron walls is easy work, may be interested to read the account of Commander S. D. Greene, then Executive Officer of the *Monitor*, given in *The Century* magazine in 1885, of the manner in which his superior officer received his wounds. Commander Greene writes:

Soon after noon a shell from the enemy's gun, the muzzle not ten yards distant, struck the forward side of the pilot-house directly in the sight-hole, or slit, and exploded, cracking the second iron log and partly lifting the top, leaving an opening. Worden was standing immediately behind this spot, and received in his face the force of the blow, which partly stunned him, and, filling his eyes with powder, utterly blinded him. The injury was known only to those in the pilot-house and its immediate vicinity. The flood of light rushing through the top of the pilot-house, now partly open, caused Worden, blind as he was, to believe that the pilot-house was seriously injured, if not destroyed; he therefore gave orders to put the helm to starboard and "sheer off." Thus the *Monitor* retired temporarily from the action, in order to ascertain the extent of the injuries she had received. At the same time, Worden sent for me, and leaving Stimers the only officer in the turret I went forward at once, and found him standing at the foot of the ladder leading to the pilot-house. He was a ghastly sight, with his eyes closed and the blood apparently rushing from every pore in the upper part of his face. He told me that he was seriously wounded, and directed me to take command. I assisted in leading him to a sofa in his cabin, where he was tenderly cared for by Doctor Logue, and then I assumed command. Blind and suffering as he was, Worden's fortitude never forsook him; he frequently asked from his bed of pain of the progress of affairs, and when told that the *Minnesota* was saved, he said, "Then I can die happy."

Only men who know sailors, and who know their simple natures, their childlike confidence in those they respect, and the unchronicled heroisms of their laborious and perilous lives, can probably appreciate the relations between the crew of the *Monitor* and their captain. Every seaman on the *Monitor* was a volunteer, for the service she was sent on was considered so perilous that no men were drafted to her from other ships. Lieutenant Worden recruited them personally, and was as proud of them as of his own children. His pride in his crew was warmly reciprocated by his men, and found expression in the following letter, written to him while he was lying in Washington disabled by his wound, with President Lincoln for a visitor and friend:

HAMPTON ROADS, April 24, 1862.
U. S. *Monitor*.

TO CAPTAIN WORDEN,

To Our Dear and Honored Captain,

Dear Sir: These few lines is from your own crew of the *Monitor* with their kindest Love to you their Honored Captain, hoping to God that they will have the pleasure of welcoming you back to us again soon, for we are all ready, able and willing to meet Death or anything else, only give us back our Captain again. Dear Captain, we have got your pilot-house fixed and all ready for you when you get well again; and we all sincerely hope that soon we will have the pleasure of welcoming you back to it. . . . We are waiting very patiently to engage our Antagonist if we could only get a chance to do so. The last time she came out we all thought we would have the pleasure of sinking her. But we all got disappointed, for we did not fire one shot, and the Norfolk paper says we are all cowards in the *Monitor*, and all we want is a chance to show them where it lies; with you for our Captain we can teach them who is cowards. But there is a great deal we would like to write to you, but we think you will soon be with us again yourself. But we all join in with our kindest love to you, hoping that God will restore you to us again, and hoping that your sufferings is at an end now, and we are all so glad to hear that your eyesight will be spared to you again. We would wish to write more to you if we have your kind permission to do so, but at present we all conclude by tendering to you our kindest love and affection, to our Dear and Honored Captain.

We remain, until Death, your Affectionate Crew,

THE MONITOR BOYS.

If there is an American who can read this touching tribute to a hero, from heroes whose heroism was only less in degree, without emotion, he had better surrender his citizenship. If anything would add more honor to that which crowns the noble old head on Mr. Kelly's panel, it would be this stumbling letter, more eloquent than the studied flights of the most brilliant orator, and more poetic than the most splendidly rounded strophes of a famous bard.

The Shakspeare Society of New York propose a four-text edition of "Hamlet," to be sold to 750 subscribers. In exact fac-simile the texts of 1603, 1604, 1623, will be paralleled with an eclectic modern text, and accompanied by a translation of the German version performed in Dresden in 1603. The volume will be luxuriously got up.